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# The Leo Frank case

Murder in Georgia - 1913



Leo Franks was a bisexual pedophile, and a drug addict, who managed a pencil factory in Atlanta via 1913. One day he drugged a 13 yr. old employee named Mary Phagan, and then brutally raped and murdered her.

Frank, and a handyman, drag the body to the basement where they were going to burn it in the factory furnace the next day. That night a watchman finds the body - calls the police - Franks is arrested - found guilty and sentenced to hang. The governor commutes the sentence and Marietta finest families broke into jail and lynched him

Today the Jewish community hails Leo Franks as a innocent martyr - a victim of anti-Semitism

### **The Victim**



#### **Mary Phagan**

A 13 yr. old employee of the National Pencil Factory in Atlanta, was murdered .

### **The Murderer**



#### **Leo Frank**

Frank was a Cornell-educated Jew raised in New York City, living in Atlanta. President of his local B'nai Brith, active in civic affairs, he was Phagan's supervisor at the National Pencil Factory.

#### **The Witness**

Frank was sexual pervert who both was homosexual and preyed on young girls. He forced employees to have sex with him.



**James Conley**

He worked at the pencil factory as a sweeper and handyman and walked in on the murder.

### **Watchman**



**Newt Lee**

Night watchman that found the body

## **The murder**

**13 years old**



April 26th, 1913 - Leo Frank had Conley "watch out" for him while he "chatted" with Mary Phagan. Frank demanded sex, and Phagan refused. Next Frank, in cocaine induced rage, beat her mercilessly. He then pulled her underwear off, tied it around her throat, and raped her. After Frank finished he strangled her to death with the cord.

Frank summons Conley into the office, where he finds Leo crouching over the unconscious girl. Leo tells him that Mary had resisted his advances, and when he grabbed her had fallen and struck her head. When he had finished with her he decided to kill her.

Frank tried to get Conley to burn the body in the factory's basement furnace.

Frank and Conley took the body to the basement.

Conley dragged Mary across the coal cindered basement floor, face down, causing punctures and holes in her face.

Worried that smoke on a holiday would attract attention, Frank decided to burn the body the next day . They went back to Frank's office where Frank indicated there would be money waiting for Conley if he "kept his mouth shut".

Here Frank uttered the ominous phrase *"Why should I hang?"*

Frank then had Conley write the notes found near the body, apparently in an attempt to incriminate Newt Lee.

Newt Lee discovers the body and calls the police. The police find the little girl's body in a cinder pile - One eye had been blackened by a blow and over both eyes was a slight abrasion.

The left side of the head bore a two-inch wound, and there was a cut below the left knee. Drawn tightly about her neck was a cord buried in the flesh.

The girl had been beaten and strangled and then raped.

**Franks paid a negro \$ 200 to burn little Mary**



***Newt Lee***

The night watchman who discovered Mary Phagan's body and telephoned police.



He testified for over two hours, telling the same story he had told police, that he noticed the



body when he went into the basement to the restroom. He also told of Leo Frank being nervous.

That night, Frank called Lee to ask if everything was alright, an unusual practice for him.

## **Jewish involvement**



### **ADL formed**

Leo Frank was president of the Atlanta B'nai B'rith, and he was lynched. New York Jews quickly set out to form the ADL to protect themselves

### **Banai Brith employs senator**

June 24, 1913 - Georgia Senator Hoke Smith denied rumors he had been approached about and was considering aiding in Leo Frank's defense. The rumors spread after defense attorney Luther Rosser, and National Pencil Company president Ike Haas, stopped in Washington, D.C. en route to New York.

### **Body exhumed**



May 5, 1913 - Lemmie Quinn, foreman of Mary Phagan's work area at the National Pencil Factory, testified he saw Leo Frank the Saturday of the murder and he appeared to be on drugs. So the decision was made to exhume Phagan's body and search her stomach for signs of drugs.

Drugs were found



### **Alibi broken**

May 9, 1913 - Fourteen year old Monteen Stover said she had arrived at the National Pencil Factory around 12:05 PM (roughly the same time as Mary Phagan had arrived) and testified that Leo Frank was not in his office. This contradicted Frank's testimony, that he had been in his office the entire time in which it was thought Phagan had been murdered.

### **Screaming**

Another woman reported that she was walking outside the factory around 4:30 PM when she heard three **piercing screams** come from the basement of the building.





### **The Prosecutor**

May 21, 1913 -

Solicitor Hugh Dorsey announced he will seek a grand jury indictment on Leo Frank.



### **Jewish Lawyers Accused Of Bribing Detectives**

May 22 a new controversy arose in the Mary Phagan murder investigation. Phagan's step father signed an affidavit accusing Thomas Felder, the attorney responsible for bringing the Burns Detective Agency into the case, of approaching him about allowing Felder to prosecute the case.

Detectives presented transcripts of dictograph recordings in which Felder had offered them \$1000 for access to the case evidence.

May 23 - **The grand jury** took only ten minutes to hand down a murder indictment against Leo Frank. The indictment was largely based on the testimony of Conley, and held the Negro as an accessory. There were five Hebrews on this grand jury.



## Various witnesses to Leo Frank's sexual deviciencies



**Tom Watson** told about the young Hebrew, and confirmed tales of indescribable orgies in Leo's office .



**Several women and girls** come forward to say Frank had made improper advances to them in the past. The girls were always complaining that Franks would **walk into the girl's changing room**.



**George Epps**, a friend of Mary Phagan, testified that Phagan was afraid of Frank because he had flirted and made advances toward her



**Hugh Dorsey** then called several female ex-employees of the National Pencil Factory to the stand. They all testified that they had a bad opinion of Leo Frank's character and gave concrete examples of immoral behavior on his part.



**Conley** had often sat outside Leo's office, as a sort of watchdog, while Leo staged his perversions behind the locked door. When anybody would approach, Conley would whistle or cough to warn his employer.



C.B. Dalton ( railroad carpenter) testified that he had seen numerous women come to the factory to visit Frank



May 10, 1913 - Robert House, an ex-policeman, had said he once caught Leo Frank and a young girl in the woods at Druid Hills park engaging in immoral acts. According to House, Frank had pleaded with him not to report the incident.



**Body Exhumed Second Time**



[May 25, 1913](#) - A second exhumation of Mary Phagan's body took place, this time to look for fingerprints; a fingerprint expert had been called in to help with the case.

The undertaker who embalmed Phagan's body said there was evidence of [sexual assault](#) and the county physician also agreed.

### **Family Cook Testifies About Frank's Confession And Attempted Bribery**

*Minola McKnight*



June 3 - Minola McKnight, the Frank family cook signed a statement saying Leo Frank was very nervous, and drinking heavily, the night after the murder of Mary Phagan. She said she overheard Frank's wife say he made her sleep on the rug, and kept asking for his pistol so he could shoot himself.

Frank had told her -- *"It is mighty bad, Minola. I might have to go to jail about this girl, and I don't know anything about it."*

Finally she said her wages had been raised as a "tip to keep quiet."

# Trial Begins

July 28, 1913

A jury was quickly selected and seated. The first witness called was Mrs. J.W. Coleman, mother of Mary Phagan. She managed to stay collected during most of her testimony, but finally broke down in tears when asked to identify the clothes her daughter had worn on the day she was murdered.

Next on the stand was George Epps, a thirteen year old boy who also worked at the National Pencil Factory. He had ridden the streetcar with Phagan the morning of April 26th, and the two had agreed to meet for an ice cream. and to watch the Confederate Memorial Day Parade at 1:00 that afternoon.



## Leo Frank's Various Alibi's

### **A Jewess lies**     *Lucille Frank*



June 2, 1913 - At first she corroborated Frank's story concerning the times he arrived home for lunch and then returned to the factory the day of the murder. She was agitated, believing her estranged husband had been telling lies to the police to get her in trouble. She said both she and Frank were innocent.



### **Jewish Assistant**     *Herbert Schiff*

August 9, 1913 - the twelfth day in the Leo Frank trial. Herbert Schiff, Jewish assistant to Leo Frank, said he worked most Saturdays and had never seen any women in Frank's office except his wife. He added that he had never seen C.B. Dalton either.



### **Witnesses Tampering Revealed**

May 7, 1913 - The wife of one of the mechanics who had testified on April 30 said she visited her husband at the factory that day and saw a "strange Negro" boarding the elevator as she left around 1:00 PM. Detectives on the case said someone was planting false evidence and trying to block the investigation.



### **Murderer hires the investigators**

Leo Frank of the National Pencil Factory expressed his unhappiness with the investigation's progress, so he personally brought in a Pinkerton's detective to aid in the investigation.

## Devastating witness



This was the seventh, and pivotal, day in the trial of Leo Frank. Jim Conley, a sweeper at the factory, was called to testify and presented a gruesome, graphic, and sometimes revolting tale.

In fact his testimony was so lurid that Judge Roan ordered all women and children cleared from the courtroom.

Conley testified he had "watched out" for Frank on several occasions, while he entertained young women in his office.

On the witness stand, Jim Conley was devastating. According to Conley, Frank had confessed the murder to him and had tried to get him, (Conley), to burn the body in the factory's basement furnace. Frank's lawyers were unable to shake Conley's story.

Some of his descriptions of what he saw intimated that Frank was a sexual deviant. Conley tells of walking in as the Jew was molesting the girl. How him and Frank dragged the body to the basement furnace room. They returned to the office where Frank had Conley write notes indicating Newt Lee the watchman.

*John Starnes*



Detective Starnes testified he had found the body in the basement, face down, with a cord tied tightly around the neck, and a pair of women's underpants tied loosely around the neck.

The back of the head was covered in blood. He had called Leo Frank to inform him of the murder, and said Frank appeared extremely nervous when he arrived at the factory. .

*Harry Scott*



Pinkerton detective in charge of their investigation of the case.

Scott then angered defense attorneys when he asserted one of them had asked him to forward all police evidence to the defense. Also testifying was former factory employee Monteen Stover, who said she had arrived at the factory at 12:05 PM to receive her pay, had waited in Frank's office for him for five minutes, then left. This contradicted Frank's statement that he had been in his office the entire time in which the murder took place.



### **Frank molested the corpse?**

Dr. J.W. Hurt, county physician who had also examined Mary Phagan's body, said there was some evidence suggesting she may have been "outraged" (sexually assaulted).

The prosecutor pointed out, she was killed for resisting, so Leo may have assaulted her as she laid dying or dead.

*Jim Conley*



## **Negro acts as a ' Lookout '**

Conley's story was to the effect that he had often sat outside Leo's office as a sort of watchdog while Leo staged his perversions behind the locked door. When anybody would approach, Conley would whistle or cough to warn his employer.

August 5, 1913 When the day ended Conley was still on the stand, while defense attorneys argued that his testimony of having been a lookout for Frank on earlier occasions should be stricken from the record as irrelevant to the case.

August 6, 1913 - this was the ninth day of the trial of Leo Frank. Judge L.S. Roan ruled that testimony that Jim Conley had acted as a lookout for Leo Frank was admissible.

Applause broke out in the courtroom; Frank's attorneys immediately contended that any further such actions would be cause for a mistrial; Judge Roan threatened to clear the courtroom if order was not maintained.

***Frank's  
mother***



August 13, 1913 - . Jim Conley had claimed he watched while Frank entertained a woman in his office that day. More character witnesses were called during the afternoon. In cross-examining one of these witnesses, [Hugh Dorsey asked if he had ever heard complaints about Frank fondling young girls.](#)

Mrs. Rae Frank, Leo Frank's mother, leapt to her feet and shouted at Dorsey "*No, nor you either, you dog.*" One of the defense attorneys escorted Mrs. Frank out of the courtroom. Another time she called Dorsey a "*Christian dog*"



## Leo Frank Testifies



August 18, 1913 - Leo Frank took the witness stand. He spoke for four hours, calmly but firmly laying out his story. Frank said Jim Conley's tale was all lies, and that the detectives tried to distort everything he (Frank) said in order to incriminate him.

He said Mary came in for her pay soon after 12:00 noon on April 26th, returned a few minutes later to ask if the shipment of metal had arrived (Phagan's job was putting metal tips on pencils), then left his office and he never saw her alive again.

He never saw Jim Conley that day. Frank concluded his statement thus: "Some newspaper man has called me 'the silent man in the Tower.' (for his unwillingness to talk to police or the press) Gentlemen, this is the time and here is the place! I have told you the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth."

## Prosecutor's final argument

August 23, 1913 - the twenty-fourth day in the trial of Leo Frank. Solicitor Hugh Dorsey continued his eloquent, yet ferocious, final argument, scoring Leo Frank for his abhorrent behavior, and contending that he could not care less what opposing attorneys or Frank's family thought of him; his duty was to Mary Phagan and the people

of Georgia.

### **Defense cries ' Anti-Semitism '**



August 25, 1913 - The defense then argued that Frank was the latest in a long line of Jews who were persecuted for their religious beliefs, and again asserted that Jim Conley was the true murderer. Conley, and many other prosecution witnesses, had shady characters, while Leo Frank had been a pillar of the community who had many well respected people, plus many of his employees, testifying on his behalf

If the case came down to Leo Frank's word against Jim Conley's, then it was obvious who should be believed.

Frank's attorneys argued that the South blamed the Jews for the civil war and the buying up of land and businesses that followed.

## **The verdict**

## **Jury decides**



Monday morning the Fifth Regiment, Georgia National Guard, was posted throughout the city, and Judge Roan gave the jurors their instructions.

Both sides have admitted that the charge was impartial and fair.

To avoid a riot, at Roan's suggestion neither Frank nor his lawyers were in court when the jury retired. It remained secluded for forty minutes.

There were two ballots; one, as to Leo's guilt, which was unanimous; and the second, as to recommendation for mercy, which would mean a life sentence. The first vote here was 11 to 1 against leniency, and the solitary juror then joined the others.

## **Georgia State Militia Was Called Out In Case Leo Franks Was Acquitted**



### Verdict delivered

At 4:55 they returned with their decision; Leo Frank was declared guilty. Neither Frank nor his family or lead attorneys were present in the courtroom when the verdict was announced.

### Leo Frank sentenced



August 26, 1913 - Judge L.S. Roan sentenced *Leo Frank to hang* for the murder of Mary Phagan.

The execution date was set for October 10, but Frank's attorneys immediately motioned for a new trial. Adolph Lewisohn, Samuel Untermyer, Louis Marshall, Rabbi Wise, and other leading Hebrews begged for clemency.

## Governor Commutes Sentence

### *Governor flees for his life*

June 20, 1915

In his last day in office, Georgia governor John Slaton **commuted the sentence** of Leo Frank, from death to life in prison.



Governor Slaton announced the commutation from hanging to life imprisonment, and all hell broke loose in Atlanta.

The militia was called out, and thrown around the governor's mansion, seven miles from the heart of the city, and martial law was declared. Hundreds of automobile loads of armed men raced through the streets to the executive home, where the mob trampled the grounds, screamed at the curtained windows, and hurled itself vainly against the militia's bayonets

He was influenced by his law partners, who represented Frank. Either way, Slaton's act was political suicide. He was forced to leave the country in fear for his own life.

The issue was now "Georgia's traitor governor who sold out to sheeny gold." Slaton was hanged in effigy; and the rumor that he and Mrs. Slaton were leaving at once for New York caused the throng to scream imprecations.

### **Frank stabbed in prison**



June 21, 1915 - Leo Frank, in the middle of the night, was transferred from the Fulton County Prison to the Georgia State Penitentiary in Milledgeville

July 18, 1915 - Prisoner J. William Creen slashed Leo Frank's throat at the Georgia State Prison Farm in Milledgeville. Only the quick actions of two other prisoners, both doctors, who stopped the flow of blood and stitched the wound, saved Frank's life.

# The lynching

## Lynch mob of leading citizens gathers



Lynching mob consisted of leading citizens in the community, men prominent in business and social circles, and even in churches."

August 16, 1915 - A caravan of eight vehicles bearing 25 armed men from the Atlanta area arrived at the Georgia State Prison at Milledgeville around 10 p.m.

Calling themselves the Knights of Mary Phagan, they cut the telephone lines, surprised the guards and entered the barrack of Leo Frank, who two years earlier had been convicted of the murder of 14-year-old Mary Phagan in one of the most infamous trials of the century. The intruders seized Frank and departed back to Marietta.

## Leo Frank lynched



August 17, 1915 - Whatever the truth may be, Frank was hanged there in Frey's grove. When word of the lynching spread, crowds gathered to see the body hanging from a tree. Photographs were taken, one of which later became a souvenir postcard.

The next morning, a farmer driving his team and wagon of produce into Marietta, 170 miles away, saw a [man dangling from a tree](#) near the roadway. He recognized Leo Frank, hanging in his silk nightgown, a hangman's noose beside his tilted jaw. He had been dead for several hours.

The farmer whipped up his horses and a little later a mob of 6,000 men and boys was crowding the highway for a look as the famous prisoner

A few in the crowd threatened, and even began to inflict, violence to Frank's body, before former judge Newt Morris convinced them to stop.

Frank's body was rushed to an undertaker in Atlanta, with a line of vehicles trailing behind. Although the undertaker tried to keep the body concealed, a large crowd soon gathered demanding to see it. After a rock was thrown through a window, officials agreed to let the public view Frank's body.

Under police supervision, thousands of curious Atlanta-area residents filed by single file to view Frank's body -- including the city detective who had arrested Frank. That night Frank's body was quickly embalmed and placed on a train for New York.

August 18, 1915 - Leo Frank's body, accompanied by his wife, departed Atlanta on a train bound for Brooklyn, NY.

August 20, 1915 - Leo Frank was buried in Brooklyn, NY.

\* As a footnote to the lynching, no one was ever prosecuted for the murder of Leo Frank.



### **Mary Phagan's Niece Writes A [Book](#)**

The niece spent thousands of hours researching court records, newspaper clippings and family records. She concluded there was no Anti Semitism but rather cold hard facts.

Frank was a cold blooded killer and he murdered the girl.

leo frank ,leo frank case ,frank leo ,the leo frank case ,leo frank trial ,leo frank lynching ,leo m frank ,the ballad of leo frank ,leo frank mary phagan

**Listen to audio of the Ballad of Mary Phagan- Server one**

**Listen to audio of the Ballad of Mary Phagan- Server  
Two**

**Jewish crowd covers up this terrible crime**



## Mary Phagan's grave

